

**PENTAGON  
RELOCATION OF PENTAGON METRO ENTRANCE**  
Arlington County Virginia

Report to the Department of Defense

March 1, 2001

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***Abstract***

The Department of Defense (DOD) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the relocation of the Metro Entrance Facility (MEF) adjacent to the southwest side of the Pentagon Building in Arlington County, Virginia. The DOD and the Congress have deemed it essential to reduce the vulnerability of the Pentagon Building to explosives, airborne chemical agents and other threats to the building and its occupants. The proposed MEF relocation plan consists of three distinct yet interrelated components. These components are the “addition,” which includes a new entrance replacing the existing direct escalator connection between the Metrorail and the Pentagon interior; the “Interface” replacement of connections between the Metrorail and Pentagon Building via escalators, elevators, and stairs; and the “Loop” system of access roads, bus stalls, and related facilities that will replace the existing bus terminal.

***Authority***

Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, as amended (40 U.S. C. 71d).

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***Commission Action***

The Commission:

- **Commends** the Department of Defense for their efforts in coordinating the proposal with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Virginia Department of Transportation, Americans with Disabilities Act/Accessibility Focus Group and all other interested parties.
- **Approves** the preliminary and final site and building plans for the relocation of the Pentagon Metro Entrance Facility, Arlington County, Virginia, as shown on NCPC Map Files No. 1.62(46.00)-40902.

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## **BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION**

### ***DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL***

The DOD has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the relocation of the Pentagon MEF to a location adjacent to the southwest side of the Pentagon Building in Arlington County, Virginia. DOD and Congress have deemed it essential to reduce the vulnerability of the Pentagon Building to explosives, airborne chemical agents, and other threats to the building and its occupants.

#### **Site**

The proposed project is located adjacent to the southwest side of the Pentagon Building. The area currently contains the existing bus terminal and related access roadways. The area is roughly bounded by Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1), the southwest face of the Pentagon Building, and Rotary Road.

#### **Program**

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase security against explosives, airborne chemical agents, and other threats to the Pentagon Building and its occupants. The current location of the bus terminal and the configuration of the Metrorail connection are deemed to be unsecure. Busses and other unsecured vehicles pass within 30 feet of the southwest face of the Pentagon.

The proposal relocates the existing bus loop to a distance of 280 feet from the face of the Pentagon. The proposal will also close three escalators and one elevator, which currently enter the Pentagon Building directly from the Metrorail station. The proposed plan is to construct a new entrance outside the perimeter of the building. The new entrance will contain security facilities as well as a new visitor's center.

#### **Site Development**

The site development will include two bus lanes with a total of 24 bus bays in a saw-tooth arrangement. The bus lanes will be staggered in elevation with the outside lane lowered to allow for a pedestrian tunnel under the inside lane. The inside lane (upper) will be adjacent to a receiving area (the "Interface") that will contain elevators, ticket sales, and escalators. This is the area where passengers can get to buses at the upper or lower levels.

Landscaping includes various tree plantings as well as a series of berms that are located between the upper platform at the Interface area and the actual Pentagon entrance (the "addition"). These berms would be approximately four feet in height and vary from 30 to 60 feet in length. DOD has advised that the berms were selected because they also provide blast protection. Existing plantings will be supplemented by additional plantings that include Cherry, Bradford Pear, European Beach and Dogwood trees. These trees will be planted along the island between the

upper and lower platform areas as well as in bosques adjacent to the entrance facility (“the addition”).

### Canopies

The proposed canopies represent a unique design for the Pentagon Metro Station. The Pentagon Metro Station is a major transportation hub that accommodates passengers from metro bus and metrorail. It is a major transportation hub that accommodates approximately 30,000 visitors per day. The canopies will provide cover for all of the pedestrian walkways from the bus drop-off and pick-up areas to the escalators and the Pentagon entrance addition. They would be constructed of a Teflon coated fiberglass supported by a steel structure. Laminated glass windshields will be incorporated into the canopies at the bus platforms to provide further inclement weather protection for passengers. The structure will be lighted in a manner that will provide a soft warm glow at night.

### Metro Entrance Facility (Addition)

The MEF is an addition that would be located on the southwest side of the Pentagon Building. This 22,785-gross-square-foot structure would house both security facilities as well as a new visitor center. It would also contain ancillary areas to support the visitor and security functions. These ancillary areas include office space, waiting areas, restrooms, and a display area for visitors. The building would be finished in limestone to be compatible with the existing Pentagon Building. The building lines of the addition would take reference from the existing Pentagon Building, but would be a more contemporary interpretation so as to distinguish itself from the existing building.

### *PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION*

At its October 5, 2000 meeting, the Commission approved the master plan modification and design concept for the relocation of the Metro Entrance Facility. The Commission urged the DOD to continue to coordinate this project with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Arlington County government, and the Virginia Department of Transportation with the objective of addressing concerns, which included passenger service issues, size and capacity of the bus terminal, and signage. Finally, the Commission requested that DOD further study and refine design plans for the MEF with the objective of minimizing, to the extent possible, passenger walking distances and pedestrian congestion at the entrance to the MEF; maximizing passenger protection from inclement weather; and enhancing the function of the connecting pedestrian walkways and visual aesthetic amenities of the open space adjacent to the MEF.

### *CONSULTATION*

The DOD has undertaken extensive coordination efforts with WMATA, Congressional representatives from the House and Senate, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation as well as representatives from the ADA, to address any concerns and issues regarding the proposal. They have also briefed the staff on their progress

and have addressed those concerns related to capacity of the bus terminal, passenger service, canopy protection and design.

### *EVALUATION*

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final site and building plans for the relocation of the Metro Entrance Facility. The need for increased security is valid because the current situation allows vehicles to come within 30 feet of the Pentagon Building and the existing Metro escalators provide direct entry into the building, for employees and visitors. Additionally, the project will provide more organized arrival, access, and circulation processes for passengers arriving and departing the Pentagon Building.

The two-level bus platforms provide separation of the busses and allow for more spacious bus movement and relieve congestion that currently occurs. Additionally, providing a means for passengers to come to a central point adjacent to the upper platform allows for ticket sales and passenger services to take place in an area that will not impede employees moving directly to the Pentagon Building.

The new entrance addition allows for required security in that this entire structure can be sealed-off in the event of a crisis or threat. It provides a consolidated point of arrival for screening and security checks prior to actually entering the Pentagon Building. Further, this structure also contains services for visitors and tourists. Some of these services include an auditorium, display space, vending area, and a tour office. This structure should greatly enhance the visitor experience.

The design of the addition results in a limestone structure that draws its material reference from the existing Pentagon Building and the new canopy structure. As such, it becomes a transition element from the more traditional architectural vocabulary of the Pentagon Building to the very contemporary forms of the canopy system. It respects the architectural vocabulary of the existing Pentagon Building.

The canopy system provides complete coverage for passengers from the time they arrive or depart. Passengers will be able to board and depart busses, enter and exit the Metro escalators, and enter the new entrance addition while being covered by the new canopy system. This system is comprised of a Teflon-coated fiberglass covering with steel structural elements and is unique to the Pentagon metro station...it visually evokes "movement."

The landscaping component, primarily consisting of a series of undulating berms, allows for visual security and interest. The berms relate to the visual "movement" evoked by the canopy system as well as provide additional blast protection. As one moves closer to the new entrance facility, bosques of trees provide a softening effect and effectively frame the entrance to this structure. Also, additional tree plantings adjacent to the Pentagon Building will supplement existing plantings in this area. Finally, tree plantings between the upper and lower bus platforms and around the bus routes will have a softening effect on the necessary expanses of pavement.

DOD has undertaken a very thorough coordination effort with WMATA, the Arlington County Government, and the Virginia Department of Transportation as well as with representatives of organizations that deal with accessibility for physically challenged passengers. Staff feels that the proposal will greatly enhance the traveling, arrival, and departure experience for passengers at the Pentagon Metro station. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final site and building plans.

## *CONFORMANCE*

### Comprehensive Plan

The proposal is not inconsistent with the Federal Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The proposed design presents options to enhance security and commuter accessibility.

### Federal Capital Improvements Program

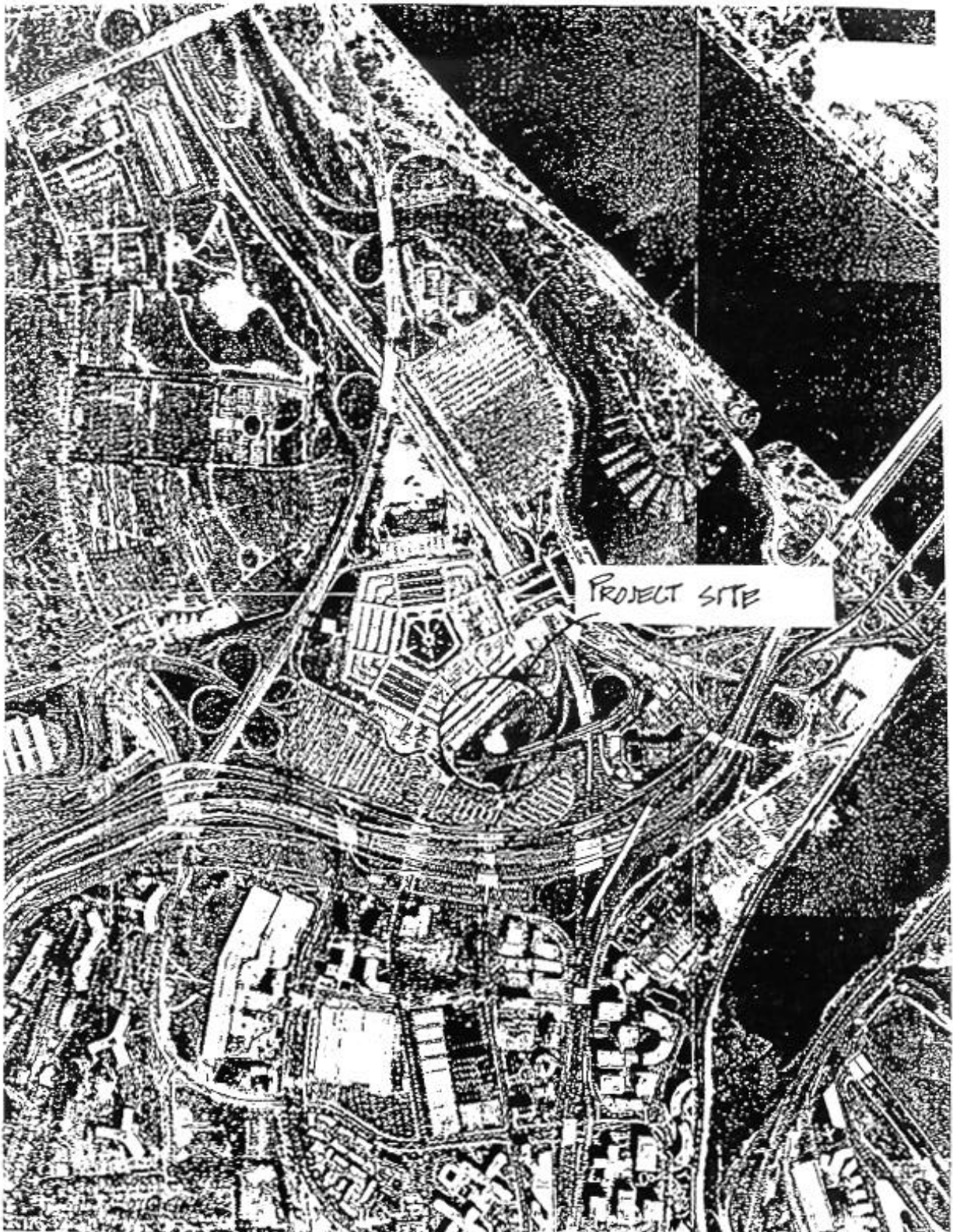
This project was not included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program, Fiscal Years 2001 – 2005, adopted by the Commission on August 3, 2000. However, this project represents an expansion to the transit improvements included in the Pentagon Renovation project listed in the adopted Federal Capital Improvements Program, Fiscal Years 2001-2005.

### National Environmental Policy Act

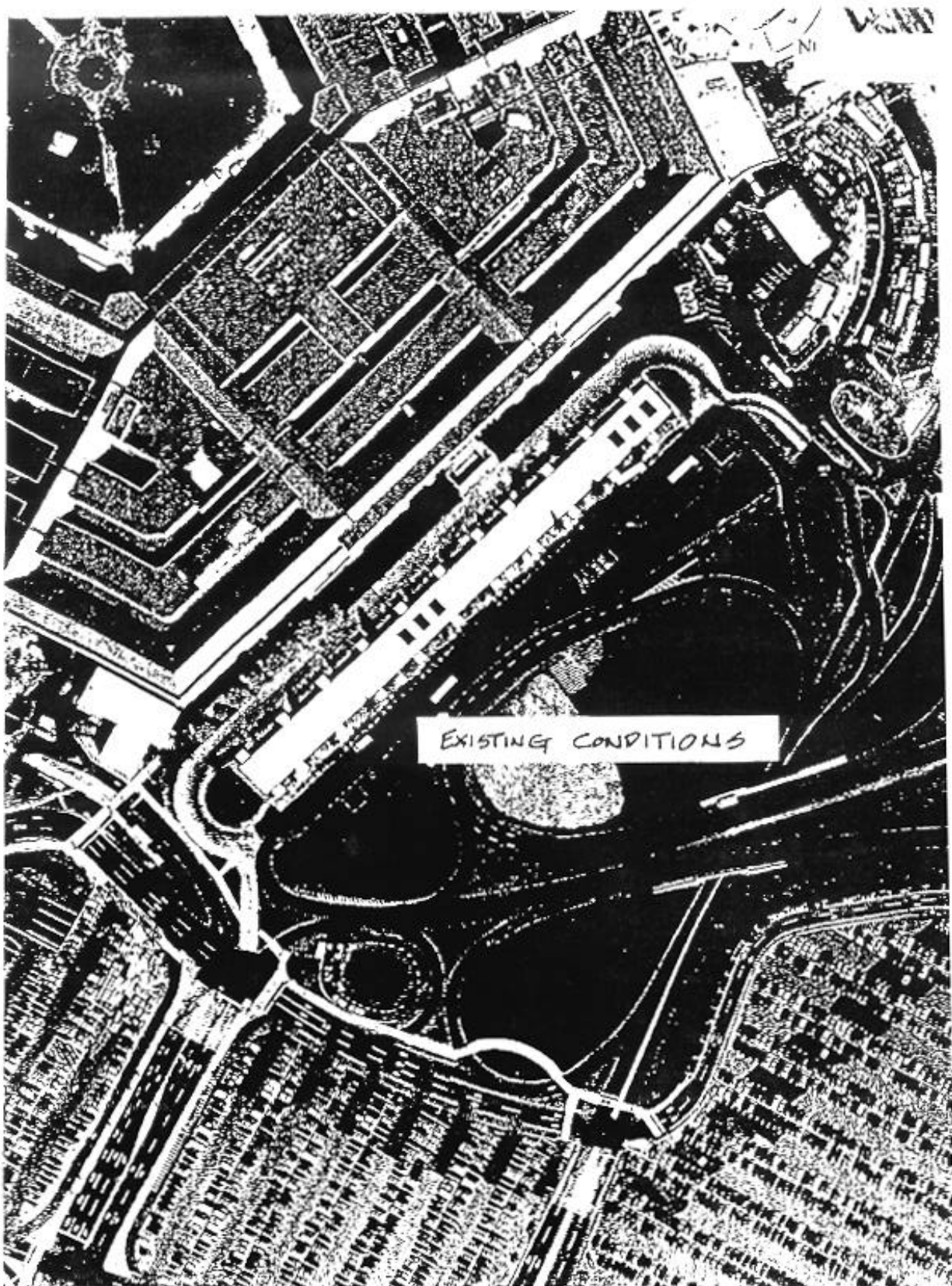
- Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of the Army developed a Supplemental Environmental Assessment. This effort was undertaken to review and update the existing Environmental Assessment developed by the Department of Defense (DOD) in May 1991.
- In November 1991 the Army completed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Pentagon Reservation Master Plan in which the transportation facilities and transit station were reviewed in the context of associated onsite and cumulative effects. The DOD revisited the analysis with updated project specific impacts in the context of the tiered information from the original document. The Pentagon Renovation Office concluded the environmental determination was still applicable and arrived at a Finding of No Significant Impact.

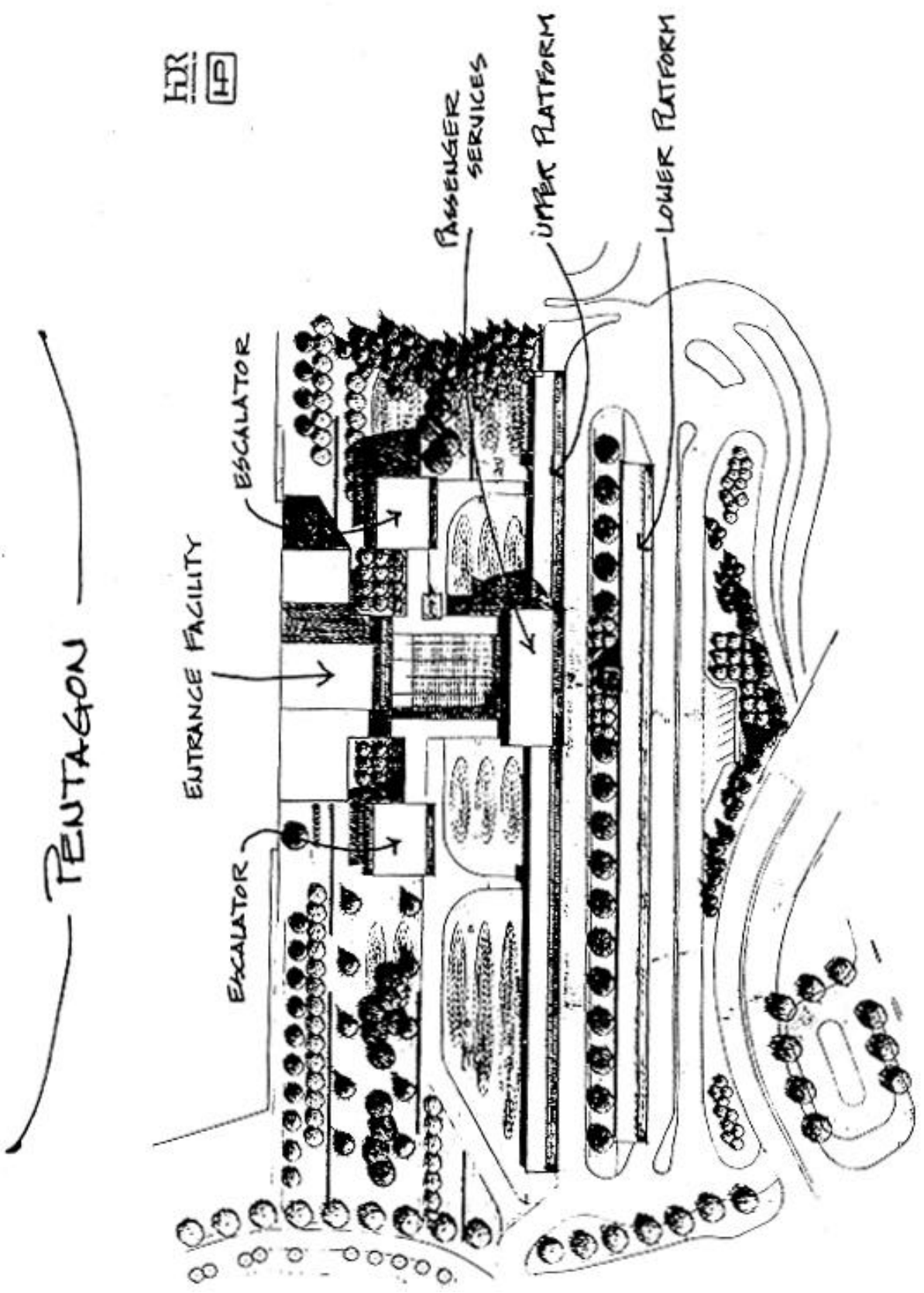
### National Historic Preservation Act

WMATA and DOD have concluded their responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Pentagon is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its continuing nationally significant role as the headquarters of the Department of Defense since World War II. The Virginia State Historic Preservation Office has concurred that the construction of the MEF would not adversely affect the architectural and historic qualities of the building and its setting that qualify it for listing in the National Register.



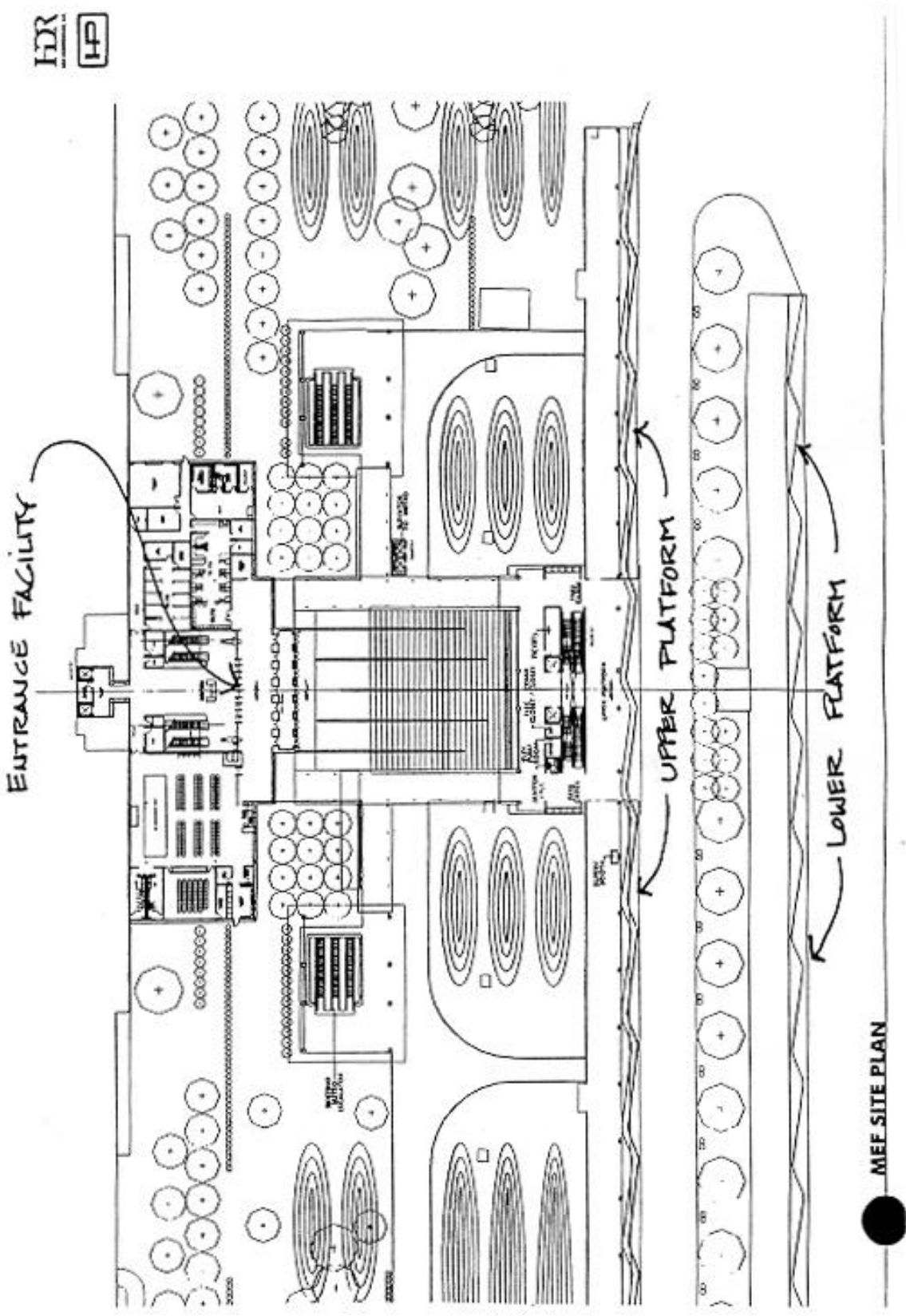




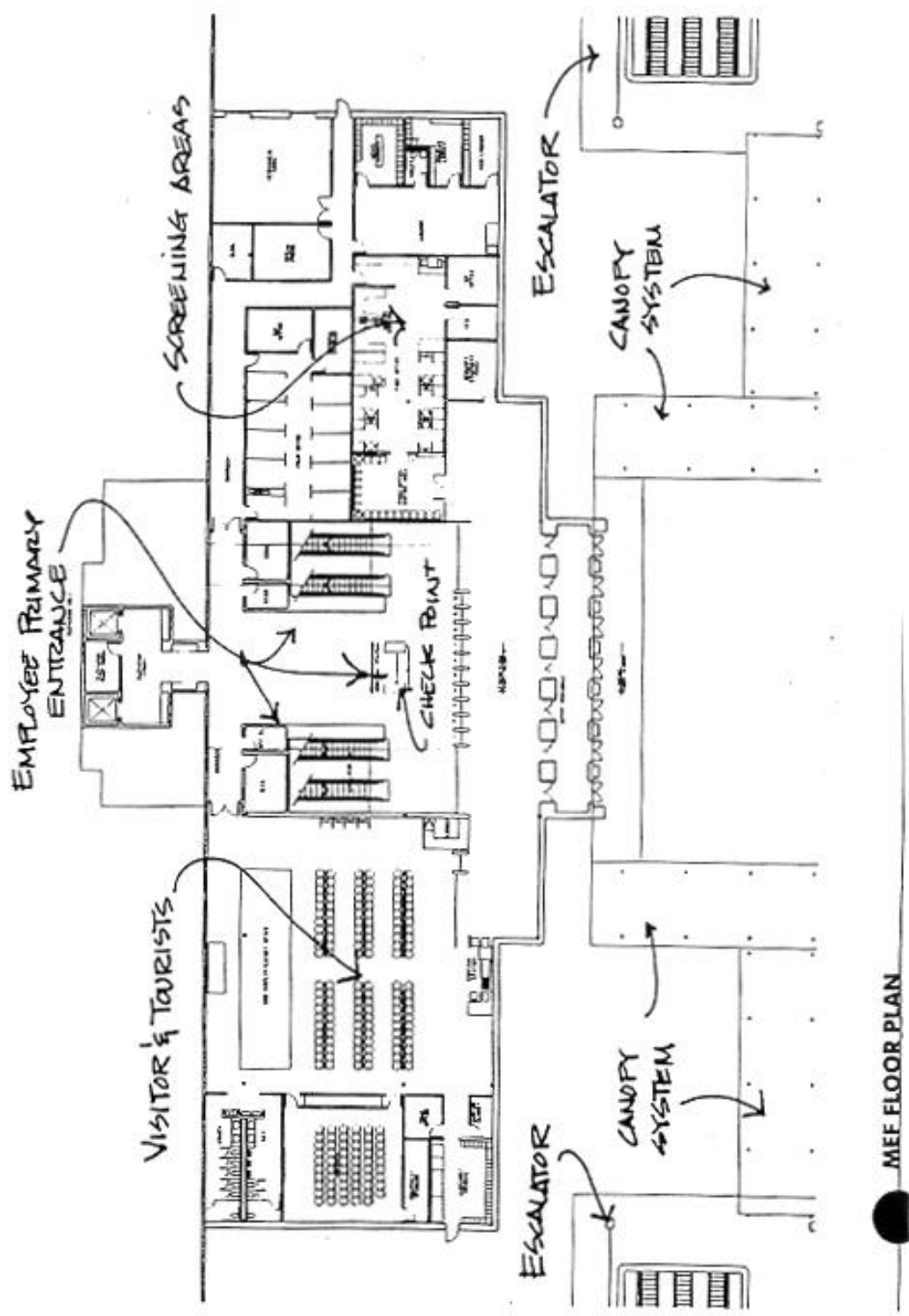


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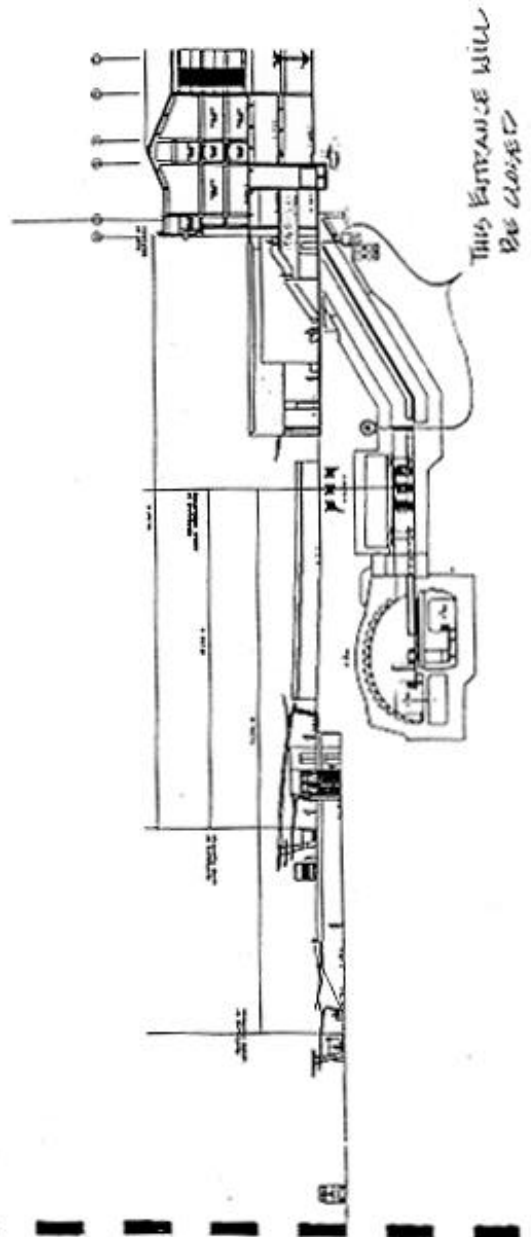
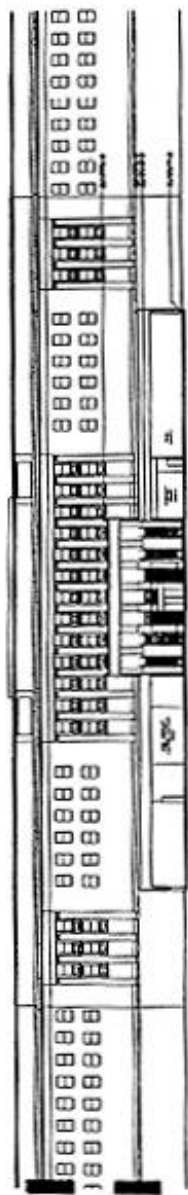


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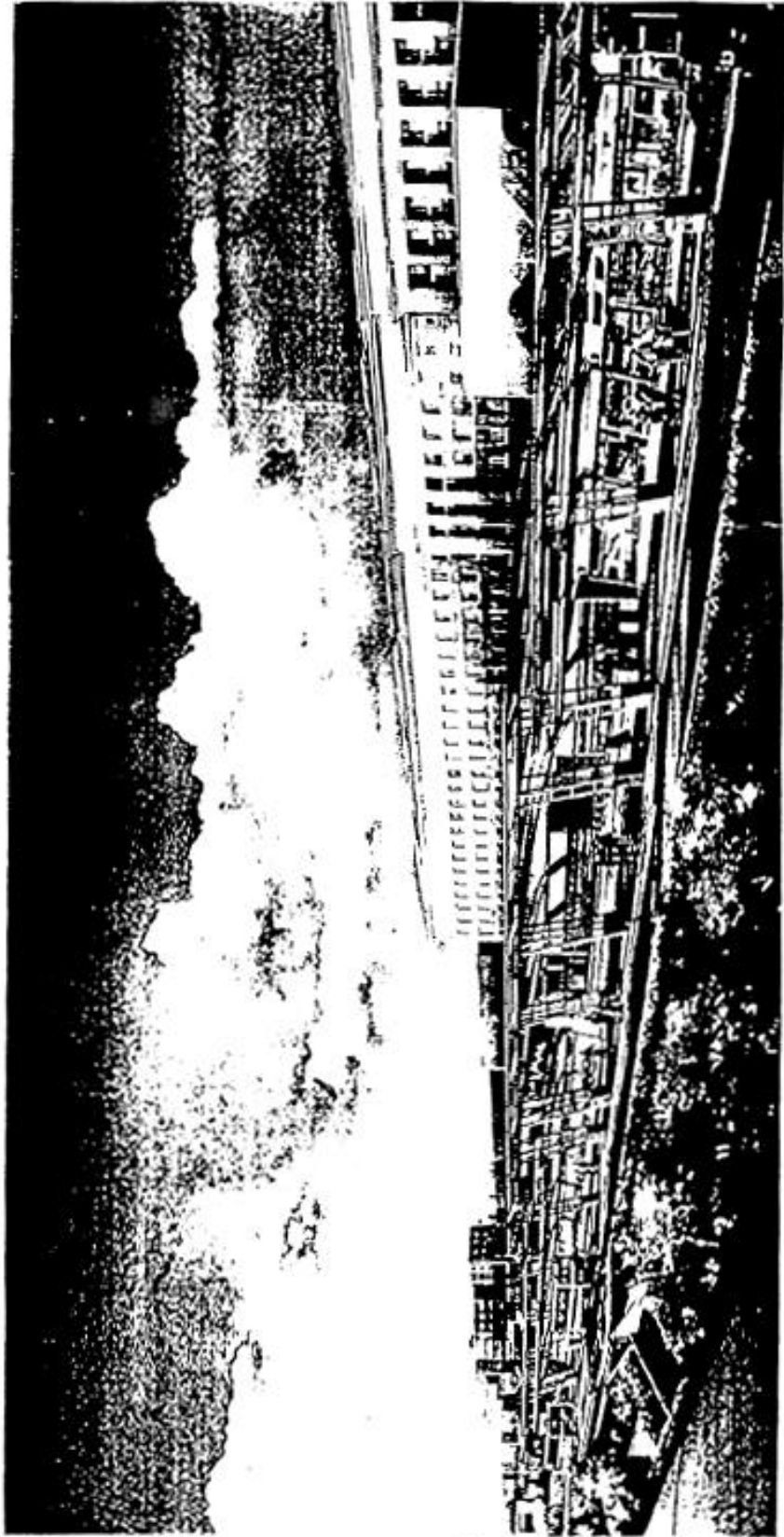
MEF FLOOR PLAN

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MEF SECTIONS

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EXTERIOR RENDERING